

***AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION  
OF 41BX784 A HISTORIC HOMESTEAD  
IN BEXAR COUNTY TEXAS***



***By  
William E. Moore***

***Brazos Valley Research Associates  
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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF 41BX784  
A HISTORIC HOMESTEAD IN BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS

BVRA Project 06-02

Principal Investigator

William E. Moore

Prepared for

Rosillo Creek Development Ltd.  
1616 Calle del Norte #48  
Laredo, Texas 78941

Prepared by

Brazos Valley Research Associates  
813 Beck Street  
Bryan, Texas 77803

## **ABSTRACT**

Brazos Valley Research Associates (BVRA) conducted an evaluation of previously recorded historic site 41BX784 in central Bexar County on March 13, 2006 for Rosillo Creek Development Ltd. of Laredo, Texas. This action was initiated by a request from the City of San Antonio, Office of Historic Preservation. The Texas Historical Commission, Archeology Division has no jurisdiction in this project; therefore, an antiquities permit was not required.

This site was recorded by Leonard K. Voellinger of Espey, Houston & Associates, Inc. in 1987 as the Richard Hild farm which was occupied during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (circa 1903) until 1987. At the time of this survey the investigators observed two water troughs, two cisterns, a tank (earthen pond) and associated wood frame pump house, three concrete slabs, and seven rubble piles representing two house sites and five ancillary structures. Espey, Huston & Associates, Inc. recommended additional work at this site to determine its eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

This site was found by BVRA to be virtually destroyed with only five intact or partially intact features present. These are the pump house, a rectangular water trough, a sandstone and mortar retaining wall, a sandstone and mortar feature of unknown function, and a metal cattle guard. The cinder block cistern noted by Voellinger is no longer present, and the piles of wooden rubble from bulldozed structures are also absent. Based on the evidence observed by BVRA, site 41BX784 is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or for designation as a State Archeological Landmark. No further work is recommended, and construction should be allowed to proceed as planned.

Copies of the report are on file at the City of San Antonio, Office of Historic Preservation; Texas Historical Commission; Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL); Rosillo Creek Development Ltd.; and BVRA.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

BVRA is grateful to the following individuals for their assistance and support. Kay Hinds, Staff Archeologist for the City of San Antonio, discussed the project with the Principal Investigator prior to commencement of the evaluation. Jason Arechiga of Rosilla Creek Development Ltd. provided maps and permission to enter the property. James E. Warren visited the site and shared his knowledge of early 20<sup>th</sup> century farmsteads. The background check was conducted by Jean Hughes, Records Conservator at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory. Jennifer McMillen and Nora Rogers performed technical editing.



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## INTRODUCTION

Rosillo Creek Development Ltd. proposes construction of a subdivision to be known as Rosillo Ranch on a 679-acre tract of land within the city limits of San Antonio, Texas in central Bexar County (Figure 1). The property is bounded on the north by Interstate Highway 10, on the south by St. Hedwig Road, on the east by Foster Road, and on the west by private property. The center of the tract is bisected by Rosillo Creek, a tributary of Ackerman Creek (Figure 2). The major drainage basin in the area is the San Antonio and Nueces rivers. The project area is depicted on the 7.5' USGS topographic map Martinez dated 1992 (2998-134 (Figure 3).

This project will consist of 14 phases, is scheduled to begin in 2007, and be completed in 2021. Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) will provide part of the funding for this project. This funding is provided by TIRZ to developers for lands that are hard to develop, underdeveloped, or blighted.

The engineering firm for this project is Bury Partners of San Angelo, Texas. Construction of the subdivision will consist of commercial and residential lots, streets, utilities, a sewer system, parks, and a school site. The entire tract will be cleared of its natural vegetation, and ornamental trees and shrubs will be planted throughout the development.

A previous cultural resources survey by Espey, Huston & Associates, Inc. of Austin, Texas discovered six archaeological sites in the area. Five of these sites (41BX770, 41BX771, 41BX772, 41BX782, and 41BX784) are located within the footprint of the proposed Rosillo Ranch. Site 41BX783 is outside the project area and has been destroyed as a result of construction of the Trans America truck stop at the intersection of Interstate Highway 10 and Foster Road.

In order to avoid adverse impacts to significant cultural resources, on city property, Kay Hinds, staff archaeologist for the San Antonio Historic Preservation Office, requested an investigation of all sites on the tract viewed to be potentially significant by a professional archaeologist. The legislation regulating cultural resources is the City of San Antonio's "Historic and Preservation Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634)." Disturbance of any site or the collection of artifacts from any site on City property prior to a determination of significance is a violation of the code. Since this is a privately funded project that falls under the jurisdiction of the City of San Antonio, an antiquities permit from the Texas Historical Commission is not required.

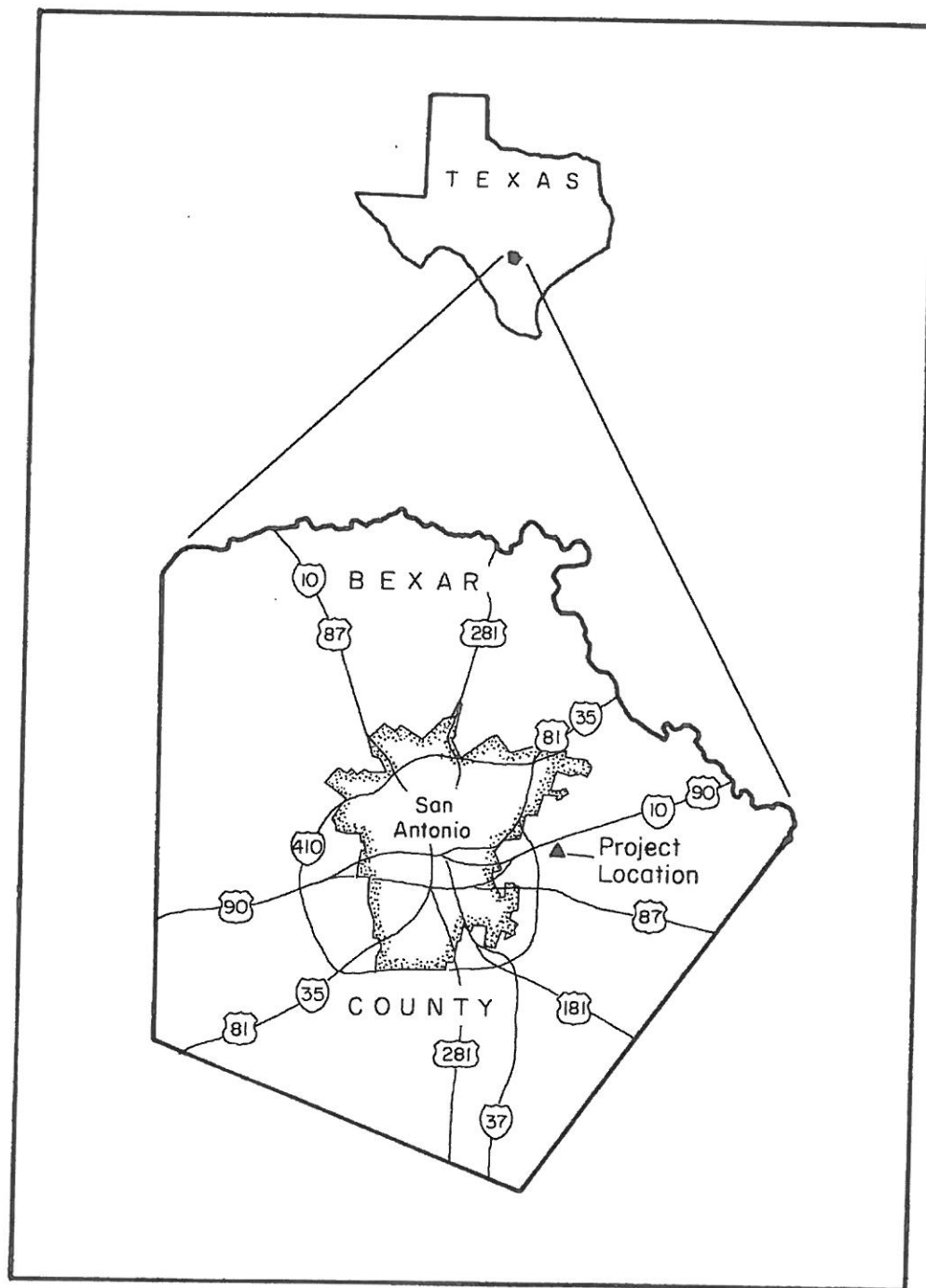


Figure 1. General Location

ITEM  
INTENTIONALLY  
OMITTED



Figure 2. Project Area (drafted from engineering map)

# ITEM INTENTIONALLY OMITTED

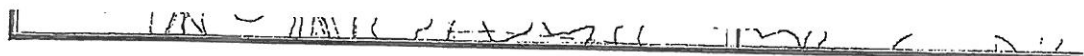


Figure 3. Project Area on Topographic Map Martinez

In order to comply with this request Rosillo Creek Development Ltd. retained BVRA to investigate historic site 41BX784, the only site viewed by Espey, Huston & Associates, Inc. to be potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The location of this site as depicted on the USGS 7.5' topographic quadrangle Martinez is depicted in Figure 2. This plotting is taken from the map files at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory and the Texas Historic Sites Atlas.

## PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

Leonard K. Voellinger of Espey, Huston & Associates, Inc. examined the current project area, in 1987 as part of the Rosillo Creek Development project (Espey, Huston & Associates, Inc. 1988). Following a records check at the Texas Historical Commission and the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory, a 100% Pedesrian Survey of the project area (800 acres) was conducted. In addition, interviews with persons knowledgeable of the area were conducted. The field survey was performed by a two-person crew walking parallel linear transects (20-30 feet apart) across the project area. Their definition of an archaeological site was a "locus of cultural activity which is manifested by two or more artifacts" (Espey, Huston & Associates, Inc. 1988:24-25). This definition included all prehistoric sites and those historic sites older than 50 years. The historical research consisted of a review of maps and deeds previously acquired by the project engineers. In addition, attempts were made to locate maps and records at the Bexar County Courthouse, the Library of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the Texas State Library, the General Land Office, the Barker History Center, and on file with the Chairman of the Bexar County Historical Society. Interviews with members of the Hild family were also conducted.

As stated above, six archaeological sites were recorded. One site (41BX770) is listed on the site form by Voellinger as "unknown prehistoric." The remaining sites (41BX771, 41BX772, 41BX782, 41BX783, and 41BX784) are historic and date to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Only site 41BX784 is viewed by Voellinger as worthy of additional investigations to determine its eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or designation as a State Archeological Landmark. According to the site form prepared by Voellinger, the site "could be eligible because it is typical of the period of agrarian settlement of the area." He states that it "should be researched further to determine its place in local history and to acquire the information necessary to accurately assess it in terms of eligibility to the NRHP."

The investigation by Voellinger was conducted in June of 1987 and consisted of a surface inspection without shovel testing. At the time of his visit, the area was covered with grasses and various native shrubs. Trees present were oak, elm, hackberry, and mesquite. He observed numerous tree stumps which indicated the recent removal of trees in the area. Use of the land in 1987 is cited by Voellinger as a field scheduled to become a residential development.

A visual survey of the site area revealed the following: two cisterns (one concrete and one cinderblock), two concrete water troughs, one tank and associated wood-frame pump house, three concrete slabs, seven rubble piles representing house sites, and five ancillary structures. The structures, all of frame construction, had been bulldozed into individual piles. Their foundations were partially intact.



## METHODS

Prior to the field assessment of historic site 41BX784, the Principal Investigator discussed the project with Kay Hinds, Staff Archaeologist for the City of San Antonio, to make sure the proper area would be investigated and the methods proposed by BVRA would be acceptable. Maps were obtained from Jason Arcechiga of Rosillo Creek Development Ltd. Jean Hughes at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory was contacted in an attempt to obtain a copy of the report documenting the previous work at 41BX784 and to check for older versions of the topographic map as well as earlier Texas Highway Department maps. The Texas Historic Sites Atlas was checked for site forms and locations. At the time of this survey the report prepared by Espey, Huston & Associates, Inc. was not on file at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory or the Texas Historical Commission. A copy was finally obtained after the survey was completed and most of this report had been written.

The field survey consisted of an on-site visit by William E. Moore and James E. Warren on March 13, 2006. The entire site area was traversed on foot in an attempt to locate the various features identified by Voellinger in his report. Each feature was designated with a letter (i.e., Feature A) and depicted on a field map. Because of the thick brush, the site map (Figure 4) was made by pacing in conjunction with a compass. Use of a tape was considered to be not practical. Photos of selected features were taken with a digital camera and appear in the *Results and Conclusions* of this report. A hand-held GPS was used to record the UTM coordinates at a point on Foster Road.

The Criteria for Evaluation for listing in the National Register of Historic Places were applied to site 41BX784 in order to determine its research potential. These criteria (in addition to the age requirement of 50 years) are:

- Sites associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- Sites associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- Sites that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- Sites that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

## RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The on-site visit identified 17 features (A-Q) associated with historic site 41BX784. They are discussed below and depicted on a map sketched in the field as Figure 4 below. Not all of the features observed by Voellinger in 1987 were present at the time of this investigation. No piles of lumber from the former structures, for example, were noted, and the number of rubble piles seen by BVRA did not equal the number described by Voellinger. The piles of lumber from the structures had been burned or removed.

### Feature A

Old barbed wire fence and road. Two fences running east-west from Foster Road to allow property owner to drive onto property without opening the gate. This feature is not mentioned by Voellinger.

### Feature B

Depression in the surface measured to be about four feet in diameter. No brick or concrete lining was observed visually, and scraping with a shovel produced only dirt. The function of this depression is unknown. Voellinger does not mention this feature.

### Feature C

Concrete cistern (5 feet in diameter). This cistern was filled in with dirt. No artifacts were observed in or around this feature. An iron inlet pipe was observed at the north edge of this feature. This pipe probably brought water from the roof of a structure. Voellinger does not mention this feature.

### Feature D

Brick-lined cistern (4 feet in diameter). This cistern was filled in with dirt. No artifacts were observed in or around this feature (Figure 5). The bricks were identified as Williams. A plastic pipe was observed near feature, and it may have been used as a replacement for an earlier iron inlet pipe. Voellinger observed this feature.

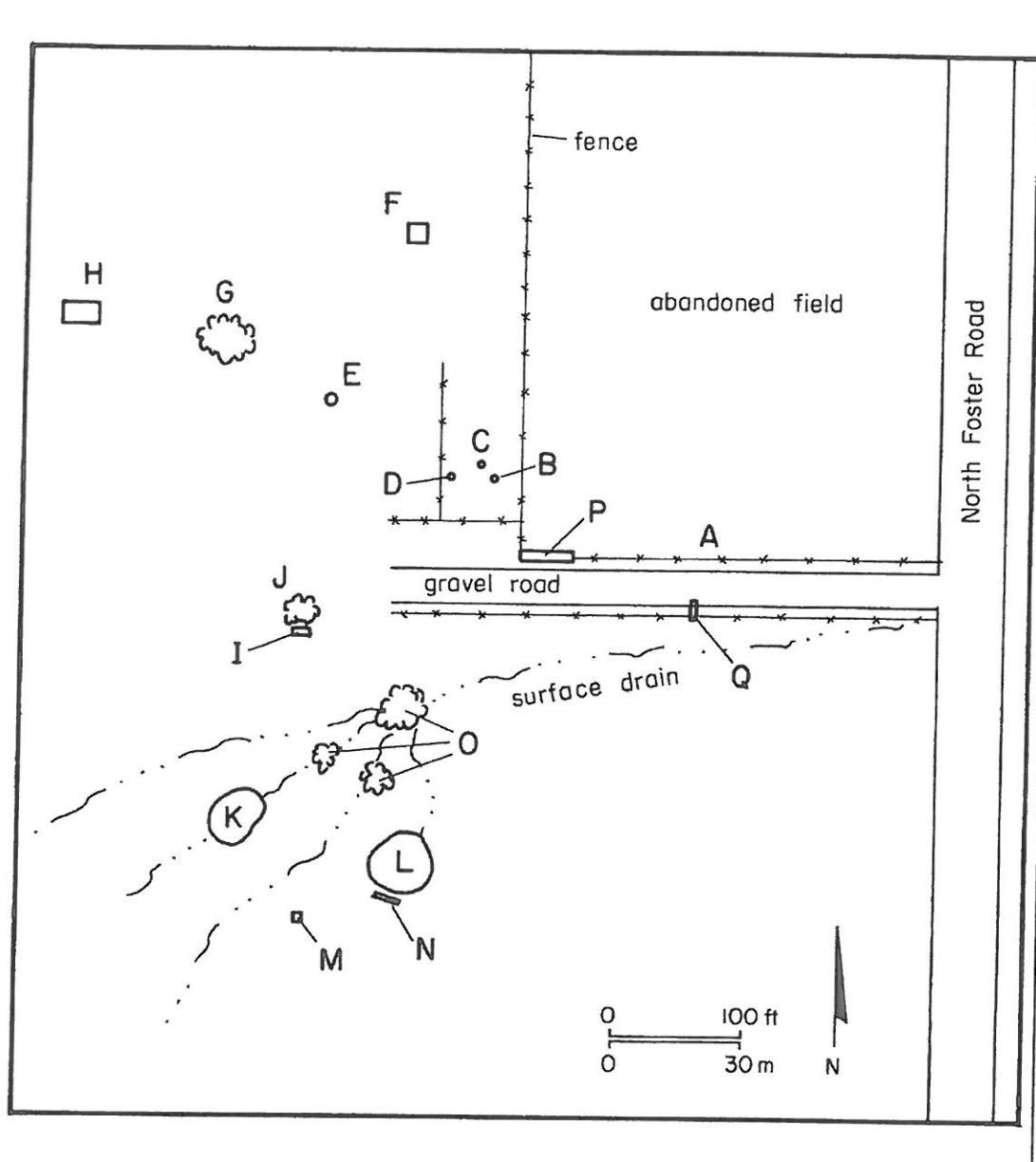


Figure 4. Site Map Depicting Features A-Q



Figure 5. Feature D

#### Feature E

Circular brick water trough (8 feet in diameter) (Figure 6). This trough was lined with brick using Portland mortar and plaster and filled in with dirt. No artifacts were observed in or around this feature. The bricks were identified as Alamo. BVRA believes this is one of the cisterns observed by Voellinger.





Figure 6. Feature E

#### Feature F

Concrete foundation (16 feet x 16 feet). This foundation was next to a rubble pile. Pieces of clay tile in the area suggest it may have functioned as a bathroom or a small dairy building. The clay tile would have allowed water runoff when the floor of the structure was washed. Scattered pieces of unidentified metal were observed near this feature. BVRA believes this is one of the foundations described by Voellinger.

#### Feature G

Concrete and brick rubble pile (40 feet in diameter) (Figure 7). Based on the presence of fire brick (D'Hanis and Loclede St. Louis), a firebox with a chimney was once present at this location. The size of the rubble pile and the presence of the brick suggests this was the location of a residence. BVRA believes this is one of the rubble piles observed by Voellinger.





Figure 7. Feature G

#### Feature H

Concrete slab (15 feet x 30 feet). This small slab appears to be the location of an outbuilding and not a residence. Its function is unknown. No artifacts were observed in or around this feature. BVRA believes this is one of the slabs described by Voellinger.

#### Feature I

Concrete water trough (12 feet long, 4 feet wide, x 2 feet deep). This feature was cast in place using Portland concrete. It was used for watering livestock. No artifacts were observed in or around this feature. BVRA believes this is one of the water troughs observed by Voellinger.

#### Feature J

Concrete rubble piles. These piles of rubble appear to have been brought in and deposited in this location, possibly to prevent erosion in gullies. The pieces of concrete were massive and lacked steel reinforcement. No artifacts were observed in or around this feature. BVRA believes these are some of the rubble piles observed by Voellinger.

#### Feature K

Earthen pond (approximately 40 feet in diameter). This pond may have functioned as a tank for watering livestock.. At the time of this investigation it was dry and overgrown with river canes. The canes may have been brought in as a soil erosion measure. Voellinger only mentions one tank. This earthen pond may be the one he observed.

#### Feature L

Dirt pond (approximately 50 feet in diameter). Same as above.

#### Feature M

Small wooden frame building with corrugated iron roof. This is the same structure that Voellinger refers to as a pump house. It is approximately 6 feet x 8 feet in plan and 8 feet in height. No artifacts were observed in or around this feature. This is the pump house observed by Voellinger.

#### Feature N

Sandstone structure plastered with Portland cement (Figure 8). It is approximately 8 feet x 8 feet in plan and 5 feet tall. It was built into an earthen embankment below the two earthen ponds. The hackberry tree to the left was already in place when the feature was constructed; otherwise, there would be cracks or movement of the left wall. This feature is not believed to be very old because of the use of Portland cement and the absence of mold or fungus on sandstone that occurs over time. It did not appear to be weathered. The function of this unusual feature is unknown. Voellinger does not mention this feature.





Figure 8. Feature N

#### Feature O

Concrete rubble piles. These piles of rubble appear to have been brought in and deposited in this location. No artifacts were observed in or around this feature. BVRA believes Voellinger observed these rubble piles.

#### Feature P

Retaining wall made of sandstone and plastered with Portland cement. It is 12 inches wide and at least 40 feet long. It is located next to the barbed wire fence along Foster Road. This may have been constructed to help prevent erosion from the adjacent cultivated fields. Voellinger does not mention this feature in his report.

## Feature Q

Welded pipe cattle guard 6 feet x 12 feet in size. Voellinger does not mention this feature in his report.

## Summary

The field investigation revealed the presence of a 20<sup>th</sup> century farmstead located in a pasture of local grasses and scattered trees, mainly hackberry and mesquite. Many of the hackberry trees were present along fence lines and adjacent to many of the site's 17 features. Birds carrying seeds probably planted them. The site is situated on an elevated landform just to the east of Rosillo Creek. A small drainage or gully passes through the site area from east to west.

No diagnostic artifacts were observed to help date this site; however, the use of Portland cement and modern brick is an indication that this site is not early. No indication of lime plaster was observed. Lime was commonly used in late 19<sup>th</sup> century and very early 20<sup>th</sup> century sites. Only five intact or partially intact features were observed. These are the small "pump house" near the earthen ponds (Feature M), the rectangular concrete water trough (Feature I), the retaining wall (Feature P), the sandstone structure near one of the earthen ponds (Feature N), and the metal cattle guard (Feature Q).

According to the soil survey for Bexar County (Taylor et al. 1991: Sheet 55), the soils in the area of site 41BX784 belong to the Houston Black series and consist of Houston Black gravelly clay, 1 to 3 percent slopes (HuB) and Houston Black gravelly clay, 3 to 5 percent slopes (HuC). Soils in this series are described by Taylor et al. (1991:20) as clayey soils that are deep, dark gray, and calcareous. They are found on landforms that are nearly level to strongly sloping. Nearly all Houston Black soils have gravels on the surface and in the plow zone. These soils have slow to rapid runoff drainage, and internal drainage is slow to none. Rainfall is very rapidly absorbed when the soil is dry and cracked. These soils are often cultivated with grain sorghum and corn being the main crops. Small grains, cotton, other dry land crops, and native grasses or varieties of perennial grass are also grown.

Voellinger conducted extensive archival research and interviewed members of the Hild family. He found that residents of German descent occupied the site from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century until 1987. They subsisted by raising cotton as their money crop and dairy cattle for butter and other dairy products that were sold in town by family members. Hogs and chickens were also kept. Water was obtained from a cistern. Rosillo Creek and a spring-fed tank provided water for crops and cattle. The interested reader is referred to the report by Voellinger as a source of additional information regarding the Hild family and site 41BX784.



Although this site is probably greater than 50 years of age, it is not believed to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places due to its poor condition. Voellinger discusses the condition of 41BX784 when he remarks on page 47 that "The physical portions of this site have been severely altered and no longer reflect their original character, therefore, the integrity of this site is questionable." In his argument for site significance Voellinger states "the building foundations are still in place making it possible to map the site for comparative analysis with settlement patterns of farms of persons of similar and different ethnic backgrounds" (Espey, Huston & Associates, Inc. 1988:47). He reasons that the site could be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places because it is typical of the period of agrarian settlement of the area.

BVRA found the site to be in worse condition than in 1987 when Voellinger assessed it. The wooden rubble piles have disappeared, and not one of the cement slabs is in good condition. At this time it is not possible to create a map that would accurately show the footprint of the Hild farm, as it was when it was occupied. BVRA does not believe that additional archival research would add to the extensive work done by Voellinger. Since diagnostic artifacts were virtually absent at this site, a controlled surface collection would most certainly be provide little information. Also, it is doubtful that artifacts exist below the existing ground surface unless the cisterns were used at some time as a dump. Any such artifacts would simply support an occupation that spanned a period of about 80 years (1903 through 1987).

Applying the four criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the following comments describe the significance of site 41BX784:

- This site is part of a regional agrarian existence in Bexar County, but BVRA does not believe it has made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- Richard Hild and his family are not viewed by BVRA as significant persons in Texas history
- The construction of the features of the Hild farm is not the work of a master craftsman, nor do they possess high artistic values. The features at this site are typical of numerous similar farmsteads.
- Although the Hild farm may yield information that is important to the history of Bexar County, this site is not unusual. Also, very little can be added to the research conducted by Voellinger.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Rosillo Creek Development, Ltd. be allowed to proceed with construction as planned. Although all archaeological sites have value, BVRA believes that site 41BX784 is typical of farmsteads of this period in Bexar County. Therefore, the information gained from extensive archival research, also interesting, would probably not provide new data regarding the use of the area by agriculturalists during this period.

## REFERENCES CITED

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Taylor, F. B., R. B. Hailey, and D. L. Richmond

1991 *Soil Survey of Bexar County, Texas*. Published by the United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, In Cooperation with the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station.



ESPEY,  
HUSTON &  
ASSOCIATES, INC.

Engineering & Environmental Consultants

Document No. 870647  
EH&A Job No. 10323

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
OF THE PROPOSED  
ROSILLO CREEK DEVELOPMENT  
BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS

Prepared for:  
San Antonio Savings Association  
P.O. Box 1810  
San Antonio, Texas 78296

Prepared by:  
Espey, Huston & Associates, Inc.  
P.O. Box 519  
Austin, Texas 78767

June 1988

ESPEY, HUSTON & ASSOCIATES, INC.

ABSTRACT

During June, 1987, an archaeological survey of the proposed Rosillo Creek Development was conducted by the Cultural Resources Section of Espey, Huston & Associates, Inc., Austin, Texas for San Antonio Savings Association of San Antonio. The survey of the proposed 800-acre residential development resulted in the location of six archaeological sites, including one prehistoric site and five historic sites. The prehistoric site is related to the procurement of the natural gravel deposits which occur in the project area; however, a few broken tools found on the site testify to its use for hunting as well. National Register nomination is not in order for the prehistoric site as it lacks integrity and is not likely to have a significant information yield potential. Four of the five historic sites are related to the settlement of the project area by German immigrants during the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The fifth historic site, which dates to the mid-1930s, may have been used as a men's social club and does not appear to be of an age to be considered eligible for the National Register. The remaining four sites may be eligible for the National Register because they are typical of the period of German agrarian settlement of the area.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

In June of 1987, cultural resources investigations were conducted of the proposed 800-acre (ac) (324-hectare (ha)) Rosillo Creek development located in Bexar County, Texas (Figure 1). The investigations were conducted by the cultural resources section of Espey, Huston & Associates, Inc. (EH&A), Austin, Texas for San Antonio Savngs Association (SASA), San Antonio, Texas. The purpose of these investigations is to identify cultural resources that may be impacted by the development and to assess cultural resources sites in terms of their potential eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The scope of work includes a records review, a field survey, archival research and a report.

Rosillo Creek development is situated east of San Antonio approximately one mile east of Interstate 410 and 1.5 miles west of Martinez, Texas. The project area is bounded on the north by Interstate Highway 10, on the east by Foster Road, on the south by St. Hedwig Road (FM 1346), and on the west by the National Guard's Martindale Army Airfield. Rosillo and Ackerman creeks, joined by numerous ephemeral tributaries, pass through the area in a dendritic pattern flowing in a basically southern direction.

This investigation complies with the Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36 CFR 800); the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (PL 89-665), as amended in 1974 (PL 94-442), 1976 and 1980; the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (PL 91-190; 83 Sta. 915, 42 U.S.C. 4321, 1970); Executive Order 11593; Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment (36 CFR 8921), 1971; Preservation of Historical and Archaeological Data (PL 93-291, 88 Stat. 184), 1974; the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 and the Guidelines of the Council of Texas Archeologists (1984).

#### 4.0 METHODOLOGY

The cultural resources investigations of the proposed Rosillo Creek development included (1) a review of existing cultural resources records; (2) the physical examination of the property to record archaeological and historical sites; and (3) preliminary research of pertinent records and literature, as well as interviews with persons knowledgeable of the area, to determine the background of the cultural resources within the Rosillo Creek project area.

The field survey was preceded by a review of the National Register of Historic Places and the records of the Texas Historical Commission (THC) and the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL), Balcones Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, for the identification of previously-recorded sites, on or near the project area, including sites on or determined eligible for inclusion on the NRHP. The Guide to Official Texas Historical Markers was also reviewed to determine the existence of any significant historic sites which TARL may not have on record.

The archaeological survey involved a complete pedestrian coverage of the Rosillo Creek project area. The purpose of the survey was to locate cultural resources within the project area and to determine the potential of these resources for eligibility to the NRHP. The survey was performed by a two-person crew, walking parallel linear transects across the project area. These transects were spaced at intervals of 20-30 m (66-98 ft). The incorporation of 10 m (33 ft) of flexibility into the program was designed to allow for increased surveillance of areas exhibiting dense vegetation or sedimentation. Repeated passes across the project area were made until coverage was complete. Upon encountering cultural materials, an intensive search of the surrounding area was made to determine whether the find should be classified as a site. An archaeological site is defined, for the purposes of this study, as a locus of cultural activity which is manifested by two

or more artifacts. This definition includes all prehistoric sites and those historic sites older than 50 years.

Archaeological sites were plotted on USGS quadrangle maps and recorded using State of Texas Archeological Site Data Forms. Sites located within the project area were subjected to an intensive survey to determine the horizontal and vertical boundaries of the site and to locate temporally diagnostic artifacts or features. Shovel tests were performed on sites located within the project area to determine the soil depth and to check for the presence of subsurface cultural deposits. Shovel testing was also to be conducted in areas of high probability and low surface visibility. High-probability areas are those which previous research in the region has shown to be likely to contain archaeological sites. These are primarily located on hills or terraces overlooking permanent streams. All excavated soils were screened through 1/4-inch mesh hardware cloth. The diagnostic material collected in the project area will be submitted for curation and permanent housing at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL), University of Texas at Austin. Historic sites were subjected to non-controlled surface collections. Artifact specimens were inventoried and catalogued according to classification, and such attributes as manufacturing technique were described. These artifacts were returned to the site after analyses was complete. All structures and various environmental settings were photographed. A daily log was kept indicating the progress and results of each day's field work.

#### Record Search/Literature Review/Interviews

Research using records, literature, and interviews was conducted for prehistoric resources. Additionally, persons knowledgeable of the prehistory of the area were consulted to provide insight into the project area. Sources for the literature/records review included TARL, and EH&A's own Technical Library. Local residents, professional and avocational archaeologists who have conducted investigations in the vicinity of the project area were interviewed.

Historical Methodology

A series of investigative techniques were utilized to record the historic sites identified during this study. The field archaeologists located and recorded the historic sites during their 100 percent field survey. The archaeological historian visited the sites in the field. Following this, maps and deeds previously acquired by the project engineers were reviewed. Initial attempts were made to locate additional maps and records at the Bexar County Courthouse, the Library of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the Texas State Library, the General Land Office, the Barker History Center and the Chairman of the Bexar County Historical Society. Initial attempts were made to locate former residents of the area resulting in two oral interviews and several limited telephone interviews.

be researched further to determine its place in local history and to acquire the information to accurately assess it in terms of its eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places.

5.1.6      41BX784

Site 41BX784, the Richard Hild farm, is situated on a gently sloping terrace approximately 396 m (1,300 ft) west of Rosillo Creek (Figure 4). The site is located 76 m (250 ft) west of Foster Road, 671 m (2,200 ft) south of the southern access road of Interstate 10 and 2.9 km (1.8 miles) east of Interstate 410. It is depicted on the Martinez 7.5' USGS quadrangle map at an elevation of approximately 204 m (670 ft) MSL. Vegetation consists of oak, elm, hackberry and mesquite trees, grasses and various native shrubs. There are numerous cut tree stumps indicating the recent removal of trees from the area. Ground-surface visibility is good, about 50 percent over the site area, due to sparse grass cover. The soil is Houston Black gravelly clay. The area of the site is approximately 305 m (1,000 ft) north-south by 183 m (600 ft) east-west. This farm has been recently impacted by bulldozing. The remains of the buildings are pushed up into piles at each location, although many of the foundations are still intact.

A visual survey of the area revealed two cisterns, one concrete and one cinderblock (Figure 11), two concrete water troughs, a tank and associated wood-frame pump house (Figure 12), three concrete slabs and seven rubble piles (two representing house sites and five ancillary structures). The area was crossfenced internally and a network of unpaved roads extends to the location of all the structures. The structures, all of frame construction, have been bulldozed into individual piles; the foundations are partially intact.

This site is located on half of a 200 acre tract purchased by Carl and Wilhermina Hild in 1903 which was divided between their sons Richard and Adolf. Property identified as belonging to Adolf was recorded as 41BX783. Site 41BX784 is

## IMAGE RESTRICTED

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Figure 11. Site 41BX784. Cinder block cistern in background. Frame structure in foreground. View to the northeast.

## IMAGE RESTRICTED

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Figure 12. Site 41BX784. Tank and adjacent frame pumphouse. Rosillo Creek drainage in background. View to the southwest.

the Richard Hild farm. Richard Hild married Clara Anna Rittemann on 26 November 1904. They had four children, two sons and two daughters, who were born and raised at their farm on Foster Road. Hugo Hild (born 17 August 1907, died 1988) inherited the farm from his father. Hugo married Inez Nolls (born 28 November 1914) on 6 December 1975. They had no children. Hugo and Inez Hild lived on the farm until the development began in 1987.

Richard and Clara Hild operated a farm on Foster Road. During the first quarter of the twentieth century, they raised cotton, employing Mexican laborers who lived in housing on his farm or possibly on Adolph's farm. Cotton was their money crop (H. Hild 1987). The cotton was transported to a gin in Martinez for processing. Richard Hild was a bookkeeper at the cotton gin in Martinez. Dairy cattle were raised; butter and other dairy products were sold in town by family members. Hogs which were kept for a quick cash return were raised until 1972. Chickens as well as crops were also raised to provide the family with their needs. Dairy cattle were replaced by beef cattle during the 1930s, possibly because of the Federal government's program to eradicate tuberculosis which was found to be transmitted to humans via milk (USDA 1921, 1930 and 1942). Sudan grass was grown during the 1970s (G. Hild 1987). No potable ground water was available on the farm as water from the cistern was used by the family (H. Hild). Rosillo Creek and a spring-fed tank supplied water for crops and cattle. Additional water for irrigation was piped in from Kirby (two miles away).

A barn was on the land when Richard Hild moved onto the property. Richard built a milk house and the family lived there until he built a house in 1911. The cistern, a 25 ft deep rock lined structure, built by a Mexican laborer in 1913, caught water from the roof (H. Hild 1987). A second small farm house was built on the property for Wilhermina Hild (Carl Hild's widow) in the late 1920s, she lived there until her death in 1948 (G. Hild 1987). A barn, dairy barn and hay shed were some of the ancillary buildings on the farm; a large barn burned down in 1939



(H. Hild 1987). Hugo Hild, who had been running the farm with his father, continued to operate it after Richard Hild died in 1966.

The site is situated within the Clemente Texada Patent on land owned and/or occupied by members of the Hild family from 1903 until 1987. The physical portions of this site have been severely altered and no longer reflect their original character, therefore the integrity of this site is questionable. However, the building foundations are still in place making it possible to map the site for comparative analysis with settlement patterns of farms of persons of similar and different ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, the site could be eligible for the National Register because it is typical of the period of agrarian settlement of the area. Site 41BX784 should be researched further to determine its place in local history and to acquire the information necessary to accurately assess it in terms of eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places.

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CONCLUSIONS

The cultural resources survey of the Rosillo Creek development resulted in the location of six newly recorded archaeological sites. This includes five historic period sites and one prehistoric period site. The historic period sites are all related to the agrarian settlement of the area. Three of the five historic sites (41BX772, 41BX783 and 41BX784) are farm complexes. Of the remaining two historic sites, one, 41BX771, exhibits a small farm complex and may have been the residence of a descendant of Andrew Christian Gembler who settled in the vicinity by the mid-1850s. The fifth historic site, 41BX782 is situated on 8 ha (21 ac) of land that was originally included in Andrew Gembler's 324-ha (800-ac) tract. This site was obtained in the 1930s by the Wolf Hunters Association for use as a meeting place. The land was not used for agricultural purposes again until the 1940s (G. Hild 1987 and H. Hild 1987). The prehistoric site (41BX770) is classified as a lithic procurement area and possible campsite. Approximately 90 percent of this site is located in a plowed field with a plow zone of 25-30 cm (10-12 inches). This site appears to lack intact buried cultural deposits due to the lack of a depositional environment coupled with long-term agricultural land use.

The five historic period sites are associated with early farms that were settled in the mid-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries by descendants of German immigrants. These German immigrants maintained close ties with other peoples of German background. The men married women of German descent and the families attended churches with German affiliation. Two farms, sites 41BX783 and 41BX784, were owned, operated and occupied by members of the same family from 1903 until the 1970s and 1980s, respectively. Carl Hild, born in Texas, May 3, 1858, the son of Johann Greg Hild who immigrated to Galveston, Texas, in 1846, bought approximately 97 ha (240 ac) of land within the Rosillo Creek development in 1903 for two of his sons, Richard and Adolph. The tract is in the northeastern corner of the project area and borders Foster Road on the east.

Site 41BX784, the Richard Hild farm, contained approximately 46 ha (113 ac). Richard and his wife, Clara Rittermann Hild, operated a cotton farm, utilizing Mexican laborers who lived on the property. The location of the residences of the Mexican laborers could not be determined, however it is possible that they lived with (or were possibly the same as) the Mexican laborers on the Adolph Hild farm as the site of the laborers residences on the Adolph Hild farm was south of the main farm complex in the direction of the Richard Hild farm. Later, during the 1920s, they converted to dairy farming and finally, in the 1930s, to a beef cattle operation. This last change probably resulted from the government's efforts to eradicate tuberculosis in dairy cattle in the mid-1930s (USDA 1921, 1930 and 1942; Porter 1988). The Hilds raised hogs for quick profit throughout the years. They also raised all of the food for their stock and themselves. A barn was on the property when it was purchased in 1903; the first house which was later used as a milkhouse was constructed shortly thereafter. A more substantial house and other ancillary structures were on the property by 1915. A final house was constructed for Carl Hild's wife, Wilhermina, possibly after his death in 1934. Richard's sons, Hugo and Alfred, helped on the farm. When Richard died in 1966, Hugo, who had never married, took over the farm. He continued to operate it until 1987, when impending development forced him to leave. The structures have been razed with the exception of the two cisterns and the pump house which are still standing. However, the resultant rubble has not been removed and the foundations are still relatively intact.

Site 41BX783, the Adolf Hild farm consisted of approximately 200 acres. Adolph and his wife, Mary Rittermann Hild, operated a cotton farm in the early twentieth century, utilizing Mexican laborers who lived on their property. They too converted their farm to a dairy operation during the 1920s and then to a beef operation in the 1930s, probably also because of the government's efforts to eradicate tuberculosis in dairy cattle in the mid-1930s (USDA 1921, 1930 and 1942; Porter 1988). The Hilds raised hogs for quick profit as well as chickens. One of the houses that was on this site was constructed in 1927 or 1928; another house was

constructed earlier. Additionally, there were several barns and outbuildings including a milk barn, blacksmith house and garage, Mexican laborers house, a concrete silo dug into a hill and the cistern. It is assumed that many of these buildings were present on the site by 1908, however additional research will be necessary to document the actual dates of construction. This site has been razed, all of the structures, with the exception of the cistern and the pump house have been removed from the site. Adolph and Mary Hild's daughter, Laura Hild Stratemann and her husband, Eugene, inherited the property. It was sold to developers in 1982.

The three other historical sites, 41BX771, 41BX772 and 41BX782, are located west of Rosillo Creek, within the Rosillo Creek development, on the eastern-most portion of the 324-ha (800-ac) tract acquired by Andrew Christian Gembler in about 1853. Andrew Christian Gembler, a German emigrant, arrived in Indianola, Texas in 1853. Site 41BX772, an early twentieth-century farmstead was built by Emil Gembler (E. Gembler, 1988), a grandson of Andrew Christian Gembler. Emil Gembler was deeded 36 ha (90.08 ac) of land from his grandfather's 324-ha (800-ac) farm by his father and mother Andreas (sic. Andrew) and Anna Gembler in 1931. Emil Gembler built the frame house which is still standing on the site, plus hay and corn barns ca. 1912-1914. He farmed 81 ha (200 ac) of land, raising corn, cotton and hay in addition to dairy and beef cattle, chickens and hogs. The dairy cows on Emil's farm were also were killed in the 1930s presumably as part of the Federal government's tuberculosis control program (USDA 1921, 1930, and 1942; Porter 1988; E. Gembler, 1988). Emil Gembler died in 1942; in 1953, Mrs. Gembler (nee Mrs. Coors) sold the 58-ha (143-ac) farm to people outside of the Gembler family.

Site 41BX771, an historic homestead, is situated in the southeastern portion of the 324-ha (800-ac) Gembler land, west of Rosillo Creek. The small house and ancillary structures are in poor condition; and appear to have been abandoned. The 1903 USGS quadrangle map for San Antonio shows a structure in

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RECOMMENDATIONS

A cultural resources survey of the proposed Rosillo Creek Development has resulted in the discovery of one prehistoric site, 41BX770, and five historic sites, 41BX771, 41BX772, 41BX782, 41BX783 and 41BX784. Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the cultural resources of the Rosillo Creek development have been assessed in terms of their potential for eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places. The criteria of the National Register, as presented in 36 CFR 60.6, are that:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects of State and local importance that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and:

1. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
2. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
3. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
4. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.



Of particular importance to the study of history and prehistory are criterion 3 and 4. It is these criteria that recognize that a site, building, etc. may be significant because it represents a particular period in American history or because of its potential to contribute to the existing body of information in a particular area.

The existing body of knowledge of the prehistory of the Salado Creek Watershed is quite limited. Any information which could help to fill the present void is significant. The prehistoric sites of the Rosillo Creek development have provided information applicable to settlement models and may contain limited information for the study of lithic technology. However the site did not contain detailed information which could contribute to the understanding of past lifeways. They are relatively light scatters of lithic artifacts and gravels on the surface or in near-surface deposits with no apparent intact subsurface deposits, which have suffered man made disturbance. Therefore, site 41BX770 is not recommended for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Of the historic sites, 41BX771, the small farmhouse associated with the Gembler tract does not appear to be architecturally significant. However, the structure may date to the late nineteenth century. The site may contain material evidence suitable to contribute to a comparison of different social groups in rural Texas during the period of its occupancy. The structures on site 41BX782 post date the mid-1930s and, therefore, are not historically significant; additionally, they have been razed. The structures at site 41BX772, the Emil Gembler farm, are still standing, although they are in a deteriorated condition. These structures have been recorded photographically and do not appear to be National Register quality. The structures at site 41BX783, the Adolph Hild farm, have been razed and, therefore, cannot be assessed architecturally. The structures at site 41BX784, the Richard Hild farm, have been bulldozed, but not removed; the foundations are still in place. At sites 41BX772 and 41BX784 it may be possible to identify some significant ethnic



related patterns in the land use associated with the placement of the structures within the complex.

Four of the historic sites, 41BX771, 41BX772, 41BX783 and 41BX784, represent a period of settlement of German immigrants of eastern Bexar County and may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D in that these sites "may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history" because they are typical of the period of German agrarian settlement of the area. The impact of German immigrants on the early settlement and economic development in Bexar County is not as well defined as it is in adjacent counties with a larger percentage of German immigrants in their population. Site 41BX771, appears to have been established within the Andrew Gembler, Sr. tract in the nineteenth century perhaps by one of his children. Although the property has been abandoned for some time, it may have been occupied for more than 100 years by members of the Gembler family. Site 41BX772 was established within the Andrew Gembler tract during the first decade of the twentieth century by his grandson and although it was sold in 1953 to people outside of the Gembler family the original structures are still standing Site 41BX783, was established by Adolph Hild the grandson of a German immigrant. This farm remained in the Hild family until 1982, a period of almost 80 years Site 41BX784, was established by Richard Hild, the grandson of a German immigrant. The farm was operated by members of the Hild family until 1987 a period of 84 years. The later two sites, 41BX783 and 41BX784, employed Mexican laborers to work on their farms during the first part of the twentieth century when they were involved in cotton production. These laborers lived on the farms perhaps at a single locality within 41BX783. If that locality could be segregated it may provide comparative data about the social and economic relationships between these two ethnic groups.

Additional archival research at sites 41BX771, 41BX772, 41BX783 and 41BX784 may identify the roles and contributions of early German settlers in Bexar County through a better understanding of their economic development and ethnic

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socialization. Information identifying their responses to regional and national developments may be intrinsic in the larger pattern of local ranching history.

Data recovery in the form of limited archaeological testing and an analysis of sheet refuse distribution at sites 41BX771, 41BX772, 41BX783 and 41BX784 with emphasis at sites 41BX783 and 41BX784 on the Mexican laborers facilities, should provide sufficient information to determine their place in local history and to acquire the information to accurately assess them in terms of their eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places.